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COSANTA.

BUREAU OF MILITARY HISTORY, 1913-21.

STATEMENT BY WITNESS

DOCUMENT NO. W.S. 522

Witness

Jerry Golden,  
49 Croydon Park Avenue,  
Fairview,  
Dublin.

Identity.

Member of 'B' Company 1st Batth. Dublin Brigade  
1913-1916;

Orderly to Commandant Ned Daly, 1st Battalion,  
1914-1916.

Subject.

- (a) National activities 1916-1921;
- (b) Organisation of Volunteer Dependants Fund,  
June 1916;
- (c) T. Ashe - imprisonment and Death, Sept. 1917.

Conditions, if any, Stipulated by Witness.

Nil

File No. S.318

STATEMENT BY Mr. JERRY GOLDEN

49, Croydon Park Avenue, Fairview, Dublin.

On Sunday evening, 30th April, 1916, I was just going to bed when our milk-man, Pat Martin, whose father was on Tallaght Hill in March 1867 with the Fenians, Pat being then about 16 years of age, called and informed me that he had seen a very prominent Volunteer throw some stuff in a sack into the Tolka. He presumed that it must have been either arms or ammunition, and that it should be recovered if possible. When it got dark that night, between seven and eight o'clock, I went up to his place, 101 Botanic Avenue, and he pointed out to me the spot where the package had been thrown in. I got down into the Tolka and lifted out a sack which contained a Lee Enfield rifle, two single-barrelled shotguns, 50 or 60 rounds of .303 and about 150 rounds of 12-bore cartridges for the shotguns which I afterwards found were filled with buckshot. I took these articles home, cleaned them and oiled them and put them in the dump in my own house, where they remained for about six or eight months when they were handed over to "B" Company of the 1st Battalion Dublin Brigade to which I belonged.

On Wednesday, 3rd May, 1916, I went down to Ballybough Bridge and obtained from the military a pass to allow me go into Middle Abbey Street, where I had informed them I was engaged at business. My excuse for going down town was that I had heard portion of Middle Abbey Street had been destroyed and I wanted to see if the office where I was working had been burned down. I saw the ruins of the G.P.O. in O'Connell Street and went into Middle Abbey St.

where I found that the office was still all right. I would not be allowed to return home the same way but had to go out by Stephen's Green to the Sth. Cir. Road, Kilmainham, Conyangham Road, Nth. Cir. Road, Glasnevin and Drumcondra.

On 14th May, 1916, I was introduced to Mrs. Tom Clarke by Paddy Holohan, who had been with me in Ashbourne. Mrs. Clarke asked me would I take up an area of the city and find out the names and addresses of the men who had been either killed in action or deported. She suggested that I should take up the North side of the city from O'Connell Street to the Park. I visited as many of the houses of the members of the 1st Battalion as I knew, and from those houses I got the names and addresses of other men who had been in the fighting in North King Street and the Four Courts area.

On 17th June Mrs. Clarke suggested that a fund should be opened to help the dependants of Volunteers and that the fund should be known as the Volunteer Dependants Fund. It was opened by a subscription from Mrs. Clarke of either £20 or £25, and from my own family and my own relatives and friends in Dublin who helped me I obtained about £15. Paddy Holohan obtained something like £30 from the area that he had visited.

On 21st May I went out to Newbarns, where the Fingal Brigade were in camp up to the time they surrendered to the British Army. In Newbarns I recovered some of the small arms and ammunition I had helped to dump on the Sunday morning of the surrender.

As there were two funds being collected for the Volunteers' dependants, one formed by Mrs. Clarke known as the Volunteers Dependants Fund, and the other known as the National Aid Fund, there was a conference called by the

committees of both Funds and it was decided to amalgamate the two Funds, but no definite decision was then arrived at. At that conference I met Greg Murphy who was then Leinster Treasurer of the I.R.B., and in the course of conversation he told me that he would try and get some others of the officials of the I.R.B. to have it re-organised, but I do not remember anything further about the organisation until some months afterwards.

On the Sunday nearest to the annual pilgrimage to Bodenstown, Paddy Holohan, Sean Browne (who was a member of the Hibernian Rifles and had escaped) and myself went up early in the morning and placed a wreath on the pillars surrounding the foundation stone of the Wolfe Tone Memorial at the top of Grafton Street in Stephen's Green.

Some time in August, 1916, there was a conference called between the Volunteers' Dependants Fund and the Irish National Aid, and it was then agreed that one Fund would be held instead of two, as they were cutting across each other's activities. This fund was to be known as the Irish National Aid Fund.

During the months of August and September myself and other men who had escaped and who were in sympathy with the movement attended at Westland Row to meet the internees who were being released in batches.

In October, 1916, Greg Murphy informed me that it was proposed to hold a conference of the I.R.B. for the amendment of the Constitution and that he would let me know when the meeting was to be held.

Shortly afterwards there was a re-organisation of the 1st Battalion companies. Amongst the matters discussed at the re-organisation meeting was that instead of re-organising as companies in the Battalion they should form football

and hurling clubs. One particular club was formed, known as the Celtic Hurling and Football Club. I joined this club as a member of the hurling and football club, but after our usual club meetings some of the members used to remain behind. I afterwards found that those who remained behind had formed themselves into the Celtic Circle of the I.R.B. I had never been asked to attend any of the meetings of the Circle, and when I spoke to Greg Murphy about it he informed that I was to keep in touch with him until the Circles of the I.R.B. had been re-organised and that I was to do nothing.

In January or February 1917 all the Companies of the four Battalions in the city were re-organised and meetings of the Companies were resumed.

On St. Patrick's Day, 1917, I went to Newbarns with the late Mick McNulty, who was a member of "A" Company of the 1st Battalion, and Pat Moynagh, who was a member of "B" Company of the 1st Battalion, both since deceased. Between the three of us we brought home from the dump all the explosives that I had helped to bury on the Sunday of the surrender.

In the month of May, 1917, I informed Tom Byrne, Capt. of "B" Company, 1st Battalion, that I had heard from my mother's relatives in the County Longford that none of the canvassers had called to canvass their votes. As I was well acquainted with the areas mentioned I asked him for permission to go down to South Longford for the election. He informed me that Dan McCarthy was the electioneering agent, and that Sean Victory of Longford could tell me where Dan would be found.

I went down to Longford and found that Dan McCarthy had his headquarters over Frank McGuinness' shop in the Main Street in Longford. I told him what I had heard.

from my mother's relatives and he asked me would I be able to canvass those districts. I said yes. He then asked me what was my Battalion and what was my unit in the Volunteers in Dublin. When I told him he said that instead of being on the political side of the Election Campaign I would be working for the Irish Volunteers, and that I would have two or three men to help me in the canvassing. Eventually I got only one man, the late Mick McGee of "A" Company, 1st Battalion, who was afterwards killed in the ambush at Clonturk Park in January 1921. We canvassed the three or four different districts that I knew, and both of us believed that through our canvassing we were able to get Joe McGuinness elected for the constituency against Paddy McKenna, who was his opponent and was well known all over the whole county as a great U.I.L. and Redmond man. Joe McGuinness's majority was 37.

On my return from Longford after the election, there were rumours that the sentenced men were about to be released. In June, 1917, there was a public meeting addressed by Cathal Brugha, Count Plunkett, Arthur Griffith and others, at which they stated that they believed that the men who had been sentenced were actually released and were on their way home. This was the meeting at which Inspector Mills of the D.M.P. was killed by a blow of a hurley.

The Following morning, 17th June, all Volunteers were ordered to attend at Westland Row station at six o'clock to welcome the sentenced men, who arrived between half-past eight and nine o'clock.

On 19th June Madame Markievicz returned, and she got a great welcome from the Citizen Army, from the Volunteers and from the people in Dublin.

Towards the end of June Greg Murphy informed me that I would be notified to attend the next meeting of the Emerald Circle of the I.R.B., whose Centre was the late George Lyons. I attended the first meeting during the last couple of days of June, 1917.

In July and August the general manoeuvres of the various Battalions of the Dublin Brigade were re-started. In September Commandant Ashe, who was Commandant of the Fingal Brigade, was arrested in Ballinalee, County Longford, and sentenced to imprisonment for a speech he had made. While a prisoner in Mountjoy he went, with others, on hunger strike for political treatment and was forcibly fed by the prison Doctor, Doctor Lowe. He died in the Mater Hospital from the effects of the forcible feeding. After he died I acted as one of the Guard of Honour when his remains were being removed from the hospital ward, and remained as one of the Guard of Honour until the remains were removed to the City Hall where they lay in state. On the Sunday of his funeral, 30th September, "A" and "B" Companies of the 1st Battalion were on duty in Glasnevin Cemetery with small arms with orders <sup>to help</sup> to cover the retreat of the men who would march as Guard of Honour with arms from the City Hall to the cemetery and who would fire the volleys over the grave in the event of the military or police attempting to disarm the Guard of Honour.

On the day after the funeral of Commandant Ashe, at the meeting of "B" Company, 1st Battalion, Frank Daly, who had been appointed Captain of the Company, appointed me instructor of the Cyclists Section of "B" Company, and Tom Byrne, who was the former Captain but had been promoted to Vice-Comdt. of the 1st Battalion, informed me that at the last meeting of the Brigade Council he had given my name as the man who could instruct the cyclists of the Brigade. He told me that he understood my appointment

would be forwarded from the Brigade shortly.

About the middle of March I received my appointment as O.C. of the Cyclists of the Dublin Brigade, and was instructed that I would take all future orders from the late Peadar Clancy. Between March and June, 1918, I had the various sections of all the Companies of the four Battalions out on training in the city and county Dublin and adjoining counties, as scouts, despatch riders and patrols. In June, 1918, the Dublin Brigade went on the annual pilgrimage to Bodenstown as cyclists.

On the Wednesday after the pilgrimage to Bodenstown I was asked if I would be able to attend at Amiens Street station on the following day to take home a parcel. I reported to Peadar Clancy the message I had got, and he informed me that it was a Seamus Robinson that I would meet at Amiens Street station. He advised me to have a cab engaged and to leave my bicycle at home. When I went to Amiens Street station I met Archie Heron, and when the Belfast train arrived at about 3.30 p.m. he introduced me to Seamus Robinson. Seamus Robinson handed over to me three large suitcases and told me to take care of the contents and have them put away safely. I took the three suitcases in the cab I had engaged and drove to my home in Botanic Avenue. When I arrived home from business in the evening time I found that "Fleming Brothers" of Drumcondra had sent up to my house about eighty or one hundred empty biscuit tins. When I opened the suitcases I found that they contained dynamite and gelnite, so I packed as much as I could into the empty biscuit tins and put them down in my dunnage, where they remained for over two years.

From June to December my time in the evenings was mainly engaged with the training of the Cyclists of the Dublin Brigade, getting them to act as scouts on manoeuvres



with the Battalion and the Brigade, and at Battalion and Brigade meetings.

In November, 1918, there was a special meeting of all I.R.B. Circles called to consider amendments to the I.R.B. Constitution. At the meeting of the Emerald Circle, to which I had been transferred, some of the amendments which had been proposed by the Supreme Council were turned down and some were approved of.

From January, 1919, to May, 1919, I was engaged in the training of the Cyclists, with the exception of the night of the raid on the Income Tax offices when all the Cyclists of the Dublin Brigade were on duty acting as scouts for the men who carried out the raids.

In June, 1919, while down in Bodenstown on the annual pilgrimage we got word that the military in the city were carrying out raids for arms and ammunition, and that we would need to be careful coming back into the city. We arrived at Inchicore and passed by three military cordons between the Black Lion at Inchicore and Kingsbridge, North Quays end. The military did not stop us and we then saw that they were only stopping traffic out of the city. We were told that they had carried out a big raid on J.J. Keane's and Willie Cullen's premises in Smithfield, but that no arms or ammunition had been got. I heard afterwards, however, that ammunition had been seized in that raid.

July to December was the same as from January to May. We had just the usual parades and drills. I had the cyclists out on test runs all over the country.

Towards the end of July Peadar Clancy informed me that it was his intention to appoint an O.C. of Cyclists in each of the four Battalions and that the Cyclists Company of each Battalion would be comprised of men who wished to be transferred from their present Companies into the Cyclists

Company. He told me that he was appointing me as O.C. of the Cyclists Company of the 1st Battalion. This Company was formed with a nucleus of 48 men from the various Companies of the 1st Battalion. From that time until the end of the year they were in training and acting as special orderlies and despatch riders for the Battalion Commandant, the Brigade I.O., the Vice Brigadier, Peadar Clancy, and for the Brigadier, Dick McKee.

During the latter part of May 1920 and the first few days of June I supplied all information which enabled the raid on King's Inns to be carried out. My account of this has already been furnished to the Bureau.

At the June meeting of the Emerald Circle of the I.R.B. which was held at 144 Pearse Street, I heard Seán McMahon, the Q.M.G., state that he was short of explosives for bombs or hand-grenades, and I informed the late George Lyons that I could supply him with plenty as I had a large quantity of explosives in my house since 1918. George Lyons told Seán McMahon, and Seán McMahon arranged with me to send three men the following evening to my home to remove the stuff. The following evening Seán O'Keeffe, "Onion" Quinn and Tommy Fulham of "B" Company, 3rd Battalion, arrived at my house on bicycles and with three small brief-cases. They told me that they had been instructed by the Captain of the Company, Seán Quinn, to collect some explosives. I asked them how they were going to remove them and they said in the bags. I replied that they would be all night on the job and that it would be better for them to get a horse and car, or a horse and cart for preference, with four or five tea chests. They went away and returned about half an hour afterwards accompanied by a man named Murray out of the 3rd Battalion, and a horse and cart. They had two large sugar boxes and three empty tea chests, which I got them to bring into the house, and all the explosives

which I had received from Seamus Robinson, together with the explosives I had removed from Newbarns, were packed into these boxes and removed by the three men.

About July, 1920, an order came from G.H.Q. that all Imperialist houses where it was thought there might be arms or ammunition were to be raided and the arms removed. I know definitely that my own Company raided three houses. In the month of August they raided a British officer's house on Marlborough Road, off the North Circular Road, and got two revolvers, a fowling piece and about fifty rounds of .45 ammunition. About a fortnight afterwards a house in Mountjoy Square was raided and they collected three fowling pieces, a long Lee Enfield and about eighty rounds of fowling ammunition. The third raid was carried out early in September on Mooneys of Cabra, but they only got three fowling pieces and about twenty rounds of ammunition there.

In November, 1920, a meeting of all the officers of the 1st Battalion was called to meet Michael Collins and Diarmuid O'Hegarty in Banba Hall. When we attended at Banba Hall Michael Collins stated that it was G.H.Q.'s suggestion that an Active Service Unit should be formed from men of each Company of the Brigade, (a) single men; (b) married men (c) both classes under forty years of age, and that any man who joined would be a paid soldier instead of a Volunteer and would be on duty all day, and at night if necessary.

The rest of 1920 was taken up by the usual training.

On Sunday, 9th January, 1921, I attended at 44 Parnell Square where I met Tom Byrne, Sean Flood who was O.C. of "C" Company, 1st Battalion, and George Irvine, Vice Commandant of the Battalion. They informed me that a report of mine which had been submitted to the late Peadar

Clancy had been handed to them. They instructed me to prepare for the ambush mentioned in the report on Auxiliary tenders the following morning at Whitehall. I spent the rest of the afternoon and evening preparing the arms, appointing the men and pointing out to them the various positions they were to take up, but, unfortunately, the ambush did not take place. Some time between half-past one and two o'clock on the morning of the 10th, the British raided Ellenfield, Drumcondra, owned by James Barry, where I was sleeping. They enquired for J.J. Walsh and Brendan and Brian Barry. They searched the house and came across some parts of old obsolete arms which were being used principally for supplying spare parts to revolvers and rifles. The officer in charge of the raiding party asked me for my name and I gave the name of James Barry. I was arrested along with James Barry, senior, the owner of the house, his son Brendan and a workman named Ned Cahill, also a member of my Company. Brian, the other son, had disappeared and escaped. We were brought up to Collinstown Aerodrome, where we remained until 21st January.

On Saturday, 21st January, 1921, Brendan Barry, his father James Barry, Ned Cahill and myself were tried by Field General Courtmartial in the North Dublin Union for being in possession of arms and ammunition without a military permit. The arms Ned Cahill was charged for being in possession of was a trench dagger which he used in repairing the harness used on the horses on the farm, but I definitely state that the only ammunition found was about 12 or 15 rounds of .22 long ammunition. The four of us refused to recognise the Court. After the trial we were brought in a military lorry from the North Dublin Union to Dublin Castle, and while the officer in charge of the military escort was on business in the Castle we were guarded by military with fixed bayonets. We were then driven from the Castle, through the centre of the city,

back to COLLINSTOWN. The soldiers informed us that in the event of the lorry being ambushed we would be the first to be shot as their orders were to shoot the prisoners if the lorry was attacked.

On 25th January, 1921, I received notification of my sentence, which was five years' penal servitude. Brendan Barry and Ned Cahill received the same sentence, and Brendan's father received nine months' hard labour.

On 26th January, 1921, I was removed from Collinstown to Mountjoy and each of us were put into separate cells in the basement of "B" Wing. On 28th January we were transferred from the basement of "B" Wing to the first floor of "A" Wing.

On February 10th a meeting of the prisoners then in Mountjoy was held in the yard while we were at exercise, and although there were other more important men than prisoners in Mountjoy I was appointed O.C. of the prisoners.

On Wednesday morning, 23rd February, I received a letter signed by the Adjutant General, Gearóid O'Sullivan, informing me that I was to inform all the prisoners in Mountjoy that while they remained in Irish prisons they were to give as much trouble to the authorities as they possibly could, and, if necessary, kick up a general row all over the place, but when they were removed to English or Scottish prisons they were to comply with all the prison regulations.

I also received a message that Eamon Duggan, who was interned in "B" Wing, wished to see me. I went round to him and I saw himself, Eoin MacNeill, Arthur Griffith and Michael Staines. Their cells were nothing like ours as they had couches covered with the blankets supplied by the authorities. I informed Eamon Duggan that a meeting had been held that morning in the yard, that it had been decided

at the meeting that I be appointed O.C. of prisoners in Mountjoy, and that we had decided ourselves to give the authorities as much trouble as we could, both in Ireland and in England or Scotland, as some of the prisoners were expecting to be sent to Peterhead in Scotland. Eamon Duggan informed me that the message I had received from Gearóid O'Sullivan was to be taken as an order and that it might be serious for me if the order was disobeyed. I replied that the men who had been arrested on their way from Cork to London to act as bodyguard for the removal of the remains of Terence MacSwiney had already decided that if they were removed to any of the prisons in Scotland or England they would refuse to wear prison clothes or carry out any of the prison officers' orders. Eamon Duggan told me that he would get word to the men in case they would be shifted that night. On that night the bodyguard of six men consisting of Tom Hunter, Paddy Canton, Pat Canty, William Fitzgerald of County Westmeath and two others were transferred to Parkhurst Prison, Isle of Wight. It afterwards transpired that the bodyguard did not know anything about the order from Gearóid O'Sullivan, with the result that for six weeks they were in Parkhurst Prison wearing nothing but Army blankets, and under punishment all the time in punishment cells. This information about the men in Parkhurst was given to me by the R.C. Chaplain in Portland who had got it from the R.C. Chaplain in Parkhurst.

During my visit to Eamon Duggan, Arthur Griffith was in his cell, and when I told him that we were expecting to be transferred to Portland, Parkhurst or Peterhead he told me not to worry as we would be released about October, but that we would not be coming back to a united Ireland as the six North-Eastern Counties of Ulster were gone permanently and would never, he thought, be brought back to us.

On Friday night, 25th February, 72 sentenced prisoners were transferred from Mountjoy to Portland. Before we left Mountjoy we were told by one of the warders that the Auxiliaries were looking for a man from Cork by the name of Joe Murphy. This Joe Murphy was the man whose case had been brought to the High Court and his sentence varied from "Death" to "Penal Servitude for life". The warder told us that the Auxiliaries had stated that Murphy would never leave Mountjoy alive. When I was brought from my cell down to the basement of Mountjoy to give any further particulars the authorities required I informed the officer of the military escort, which was composed of men of the Cheshire Regiment, what I believed the Auxiliaries were about to do. The officer then and there instructed one of the sergeants of the escort to order his men to load their rifles with live ball and on the first sign of any disturbance with the Auxiliary Force they were to fire on them. We eventually arrived safely into the lorries without any trouble from the Auxiliaries and were driven to the North Wall, where we boarded two minesweepers, H.M.S.s "Heather" and "Mystis". There were 72 of us altogether, and 40 of us were put down in the hold of one of the minesweepers, the H.M.S. "Heather". The balance, 32 men, were I believe put down in the hold of the other minesweeper, H.M.S. "Mystis".

Shortly after ten o'clock we moved away from the North Wall and spent that night down in the hold, but on the following morning one of the military escort informed us that they were going to get the prisoners up to work on the deck, and said that it would be far better for them to be up on the deck than down in the hold. I told the member of the escort that about thirty of the prisoners were sick, but those who were able were brought up on deck, and we spent until twelve o'clock generally swinging the lead but supposed to be working. We were enjoying the fresh air. After our dinner of dry bread and bullybeef, washed down

with plenty of water, we went back to our work on the deck, and at four o'clock we were sent down to the hold for the night.

On Sunday morning, 27th February, we arrived in Portland Harbour at about eight o'clock, and were marched up to Portland Prison, which was on the top of the hill, a distance of about three-quarters of a mile.

On Monday, 28th February, the governor of Portland Prison, who was a Major Supple, came round to interview all the prisoners. When he came to the cell of George Bingham, who was formerly a member of "G" Company of the 1st Battalion but had been transferred to the Dunlaoghsire Company of the South County Battalion, Bingham informed him that "Jerry Barry" was the O.C. of the prisoners and that he would carry out only whatever orders I gave him. The governor asked George Bingham where I was and he told him that I was down in cell No. 17. When the governor arrived at my cell he said, "I believe you are the O.C. of the prisoners, Barry. What do you intend to order them to do?" I replied that I would not commit myself or any of the men who had come with me from Dublin, and he said, "All right, Barry, we will remember that". I heard nothing further about the matter.

On April 6th, 1921, at about 6 p.m. after all the prisoners had been locked up for the night my cell was opened by the deputy governor who informed me that I was required across in the governor's office. The deputy governor told me that there was an official down from the Prison Commissioners to interview some of the men and that the governor had informed him that I was the prisoners' O.C. On my arrival in the governor's office the official from the Prison Commissioners asked me did I intend to order the men to disobey orders. I replied that as far as I was concerned I would not commit myself or any of the men under



me. The prison official then told me that the only concession he could make the prisoners when they would, if ever, be removed from Portland would be that they would wear their own clothes and instead of being hand-cuffed in chains of eight that they would be hand-cuffed to one another only.

On July 27th, 1921, we left Portland at about seven o'clock in the morning and were transferred to a battleship, H.M.S. "Valiant". We arrived at Plymouth Harbour at about 5 p.m. We were transferred from Plymouth by train and brought to Dartmoor, where we arrived at about 7.30 p.m.

After a few days in Dartmoor I was placed in No. 26 party and was occupied with the other members of the party in painting and whitewashing the entire of "A" Wing in Dartmoor.

All the prisoners who had been transferred from Portland together with the political prisoners who were already in Dartmoor, were placed in "D" Wing, with the result that there were 248 political prisoners in Dartmoor and 334 warders to look after us.

On Tuesday morning, 6th December, 1921, the warder when he unlocked my cell at seven o'clock informed me that he had read in the "Plymouth Herald" on the previous night at half-past ten that an agreement had been reached between the Irish and English officials and that probably we would be released before Christmas. Between January 14th and January 18th, 1922, the prisoners were released in batches from Dartmoor, and on January 18th my batch, which was the last, arrived in Dublin.

Signed:

Date;

*George Golden*  
30<sup>th</sup> May 1951

Witness: Mr F Ryan Condit

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